

# GEOFF MANN

Geoff Mann has been out of circulation for nearly a year. Fortunately he is soon to release a new album and as a fore-runner to that grand event we offer for you this interview.

Why was the group- 'The Band' formed?

GM: "To begin with it was in order to play my solo work in a live environment. However it developed into a vehicle for Steve, Dave and myself to communicate our faith and hopefully to glorify God in our shared creativity."

So who are the other members of the band?

GM: "Steve Ridley - plays keyboards and backing vocals and Dave Mortimer - plays guitars. We also use various drummers from Japanese factories."

Which tracks are to appear on the new album?

GM: "Definite tracks are to be: 'For Modern'; 'After the Storm'; 'Willy Walsh'; 'Cry Out'; 'Confidence' and 'I'm not a saint', probably also on it will be 'Certainly' 'Closer to you'."

And what label is it to be on?

GM: "We have just found out that 'Pilgrim records', one of the largest Christian labels, will be releasing it on record and cassette."

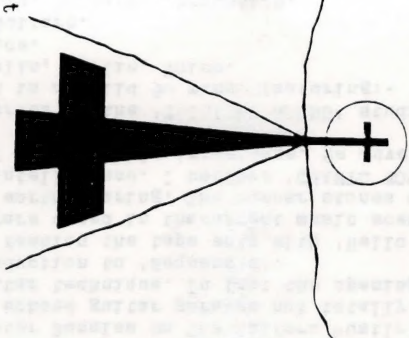
Will the album have a religious theme running through it?

GM: "As it turns out, the album does have a distinct Christian flavour to it (sounds like a sandwich) but I would like to say a few things about this aspect of my work, if I may..."

'Chants...' 'Irene...' and 'Psalm...' were all centered in and around Christ but each, I think you will agree, has been very different. I do not set out with the idea that every song must have a mention of Christ at least once, or else I will not be able to manipulate people in to thinking like me.

Talking to people at gigs, I often find myself surprised by their suspicion of the religious content. I write as a song writer and what I write comes truly from the heart. I do not try to make music with any 'theme', I just set out to express what is in me - like everyone else I often find myself failing. The new album is not as inward looking as 'Psalm...' I believe it is very positive; something of a spiritual battle-cry.

Even 'Fact and Fiction' was lyrically more about religious views than political ones. As I have grown in my Christianity, so I have wanted as a consequence to make far simpler statements about Jesus and God: - It is what is close to my heart. I know that God is alive, that I have a living relationship with him, in which judgement has been replaced by infinite love."



When can we hope to see the album in the shops?

GM: "Hopefully a month or two into the new year, if everything goes according to plan."

What are the immediate plans for the future concerning the band?

GM: "To finish recording the album and not to lose too much money on it. Also to do what we want to do and only for as long as we really believe it is worth while doing. On a lighter note to encourage Steve to wash his socks and to avoid being hit by him for mentioning it to a fanzine (Ho, Ho, Ho.)"

On a more personal level, do you prefer to work and play as a solo artist or with a group?

GM: "I enjoy both, each having qualities that the other does not. On the whole though, I prefer to work in a band."

What are the advantages and restrictions of both?

GM: "Solo you can be freer and more flexible in the amount of time allocated to talking and playing. It is harder 'to touch' the audience, but it tends to have a greater intimacy if that 'touch' is achieved. A band has greater range and the combination of personalities can bring a sum greater than the total of parts. The fellowship of the (right) hand is deeply strengthening."

Who are your personal influences?

GM: "In all things Jesus: - In personal things: - my wife, brothers and sisters in Christ and my children. In music: - practically everything I have heard and liked! At the moment I suppose - U2, Peter Gabriel and Genesis. Talking heads and Eno but it is really hard to say. I do not model myself on anyone or any style in particular; not consciously anyway. I like many things and listen to many things that I would not have thought to be influences."

Finally, when you are not working on your music, what exactly do you do?

GM: "All sorts: - working as a 'House husband', training for ordination, writing occasionally, painting occasionally, thinking (very) occasionally and the usual things like sleeping, eating and scratching my head a great deal."

There you have it, the end of another great Rocking Horse interview. We would like to take this time to wish Geoff & co. very good luck with the new album and God bless.....

